DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 195 192 HE 013 282

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TITLE Student Personnel Administration and the Adult Learner: An Unresolved Issue.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 17p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Students: *College Students: Higher Education: *Individual Development: Models: Nontraditional Education: Nontraditional Students: *Program Administration: Student College Relationship: *Student Development: Student Needs: *Student Personnel Services: Student Personnel Workers: Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

The role of college student personnel administration in serving adult learners is considered. Historical trends in the student personnel function and the philosophy that student personnel workers are educators who create programs that contribute to the student's overall educational growth are examined. Changes for the student development personnel function created by a more diversified student body are noted, and goals for this support activity that should be integrated with the academic program are outlined. The need for the integration of nontraditional programs and student services and for new models of administration of the services is considered. The attempt to integrate student development courses into the curriculum has involved three major clusters of courses: courses in human development, life-style planning, and personal understanding: independent study and experimental learning: and remedial and affective learning efforts. The emerging model for student development work emphasizes the student development specialist as a facilitator of the student's intellectual and social growth. Because adult students usually work full-time and are commuters, it is difficult to promote their involvement in extracurricular activities. It is suggested that quality adult education will be achieved in proportion to how well they are integrated with the administration of student personnel services. Different approaches to the administration of student services are examined. (SW)

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Student Personnel Administration and the Adult Learner: An Unresolved Issue

A kind of cacophony has replaced a one-time harmony in the student personnel movement in recent years because its leaders have not been as successful in trumpeting the cause of the development of "whole persons" as they were for several decades before, and the consequences have implications for the organization and governance of liberal arts colleges. Probably the two concepts in higher education which have come under the most severe attack within the last decade are "the liberal arts" and the idea of "student development." Fiscal shortages, declining enrollments, the oversupply of trained academics, and the concomitant evils of retrenchment, accountability, and the emphasis upon career training -- all have intensified the pressure upon humanistic endeavors to justify themselves, both philosophically and financially. One of the more important issues, and one that is often overlooked, is that the influx of adult students into colleges has tended to disenfranchise the traditional notion of what student personnel work is and how it should be organized. The relationship between adult education and student personnel administration remains an unresolved issue for many colleges.

When I began work as an assistant dean of students at a private liberal arts college in 1965, at small colleges, even then, personnel administrators were unspecialized, serving a variety of functions, from counseling to discipline, to financial aid, to running placement services, to overseeing housing programs. There was an aura of excitement in being a non-specialist, and the work was never dull, but there was no doubt that student personnel services were serving a secondary, support role to the academic programs of the colleges;

and while our activities were perceived largely as maintenance functions, by us and by the faculty, we were convinced that they had real significance in the mission of the development of "whole persons." Our situation was quite unlike that of the contemporary student personnel officer who administers his "area" through sub-administrators, many of whom have very little contact with students and often very little in common with each other. Ours was a highly personalized, activist role as compared with an objectivized, bureaucratic one. Perhaps this is all too nostalgic, however; part of our myopia was that we were concerned only with traditional college age students, and perhaps we assumed that mentality would remain unquestioned forever. We accepted our "support" role and therefore never concerned ourselves over the unrelatedness of the variety of roles we performed.

A movement was already underway in larger institutions to "legitimize" the student personnel function by moving it closer to the academic side of the liberal arts enterprise. Already there were signs that what was needed was a clarification of functions which would result in a more logical and efficient administration. Some were beginning to realize that recruiting, admissions and financial aid do not necessarily belong with housing, counseling, career advisement, and academic advising, and further that none of these functions were serving the adult student adequately. Most student personnel professionals were anxious to be regarded as educators, and not merely "support staff." The struggle for student personnel administrators to be recognized as "educators" has been an enduring one. Prior to the 1890's, functions now associated with student personnel were fulfilled by the faculty. In 1890 a Dean of Men was appointed at Harvard, and a Dean of Women began work in 1898.[1] The growth

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[1] Laurine E. Fitzgerald, Walter F. Johnson, Willa Norris, College Student Personnel: Reading and Bibliographies (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), p. v.

of extra-instructional programs had taken place all during the nineteenth century, but it was not until the turn of the century that formalized positions were developed. As an outgrowth, organizations of those occupying such places in colleges grew rapidly. The development of student personnel activities correlates with the growth of the "guidance movement" in secondary schools, and both grew out of the progressive movement in education.[2]

It is the period following World War I which is usually designated as the beginning point for organized student personnel efforts. The first survey of college student personnel work was L. B. Hopkins' description of 1926, the year in which the first "textbook" on the subject appeared. Personnel work came of age in the period after World War II, concomitantly with the rise of personnel work in business, industry, and government. Returning war veterans expected psychological, financial, and health services in all sectors of society, and this gave impetus to the growth of the field. In the 1950's, counseling centers were established and the integration of student services in one distinct component of the college was realized.[3] Student personnel programs initially grew out of the desire of colleges and universities to regulate student conduct, provide counseling, and keep records.[4]

At least three different structures have been tried in organizing the functions of student personnel work. Centralized, partially centralized, and decentralized systems of relating student personnel services to the academic

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[2] W. H. Cowley, "Reflections of Troublesome but Hopeful Rip Van Winkle," College Student Personnel: Readings and Bibliographies, p. 27.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Administration of Student Personnel Programs," College Student Personnel, pp. 3 - 5.

programs of colleges have been tried. The centralized type of structure became predominant in the 1950's with the creation of the post of a "Dean of Students" who would oversee all these related activities. As the specialized functions of testing, counseling, student activities, registration, admissions, records, financial aid, housing, discipline, and security grew, a need for coordinated services developed. It was reasoned that since the individual student is a total personality, those services which would help educate him should be integrated.[5]

The need for coordination of the disparate student personnel services has grown as institutions have enlarged and as functions have become more specialized:

> *To a large extent, coordination is reduced to encouraging and assisting workers to maintain continuous acquaintance with the specialities of the others so that there may be some erosion of the sometimes interfering walls or moats separating the specialities. We observe that--if there is mutual respect and up-to-date information concerning all of the special competencies--a specialist of one kind may quickly identify a student problem which needs to be referred to another specialist. This is, in effect, a kind of coordination of the services themselves. It is also, of course, a kind of administrative coordination. But we place major emphasis upon the content of the coordination rather than the mechanics themselves which are merely means to an end.*[6]

Pluralistic American society is reflected in the heterogeneity of post secondary institutions, and the varying philosophies of those institutions are most often reflected in their student personnel organizations. However, "the student personnel point of view" has been one unifying thread in most programs. The philosophy governing the point of view is based upon three assumptions:

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[5] C. G. Williamson, Student Personnel Services in Colleges and Universities (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961). pp. 68-87.

[6] Ibid. p. 117.

> *(1). individual differences in the student body are anticipated, i.e., the uniqueness of each personality does not cause surprise, but is expected and planned for; (2). the individual is conceived of and treated as a functioning whole and his development in all areas of living as a unit; (3). teaching, counseling, student activities, and other organized educational efforts of the institution start realistically from where the individual student is, not from the point of development at which the institution would like to find the hypothetical average student. The individual's current drives, interests, and needs are accepted as a significant point of origin in developing the program of the institution.*[7]

A part of this philosophy has included the concept of the student personnel worker as an educator who creates programs which contribute to the student's overall educational growth.

Sometime in the mid 'sixties, because of a desire to tie the "support" services more tightly into the overall academic programs of colleges, student personnel services began to be called student development programs. There were many factors which brought about this shift to a more mainstream, "educational" name for the student personnel functions. Rapid changes in the society itself have had a great influence--Brown cites a number of these changes as factors, including women's liberation, changing moral values, and economic pressures. He also provides a list of concomitant changes in student life: the end of the concept of *in loco parentis*, the greater voice of students in governance, tension between students and the colleges, the possible survival of the counter culture movement, the perennial problems of youth intensified, a greater individualism among students, and a new type of student who is much more vocationally oriented. Brown also points out that the increased diversity of student bodies, and the "universal higher education" im-

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[7] Walter F. Johnson, "Student Personnel Work in Higher Education," College Student Personnel, p. 9.

plications of the "open door admissions" program have changed higher education considerably. Just as faculties have had to adapt to and create programs for these new demands, student personnel workers have had to take responsibility for developing ways to serve the new kind of students.[8]

Areas in which student development personnel could have a greater impact upon adult students are in the choice of a major and a career, in social skill development, in offering chances for creative expression, even in looking at the curriculum--for instance in the crucial freshman year--to see what factors will retard attrition rates and give more motivation to students who often are disillusioned after the first year. The Council of Student Personnel Associations developed a list of ten purposes and functions of student development personnel. These ten functions, which should be integrated with the academic program, are:

1. *Assessing behaviors the student has already developed.*
2. *Formulating the student's behavioral objectives.*
3. *Selecting college programs that build on existing behaviors to accomplish the student's objectives.*
4. *Fostering student growth within the context of his own cultural background and encouraging his appreciation of the cultural backgrounds of the educational institution and of other students.*
5. *Developing physical environments, human groups, institutional organizations, and financial resources most conducive to the student's growth.*
6. *Intergrating concurrent experiences outside the institution with the student's educational program as an aid in achieving the student's objectives.*
7. *Modifying existing behaviors that block the further growth of the student.*
8. *Giving visibility to a value system that enables the student to judge the worth of behavior patterns.*
9. *Recording the student's progress as a means of facilitating his growth.*
10. *Identifying appropriate environments for continued development before and after the student leaves his present educational setting.*[9]

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[8] Robert D. Brown, Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education--A Return to the Academy, (Washington: American College Personnel Association, 1972), pp. 12-20.

[9] Ibid., p. 36.

It will be impossible to achieve these goals if new roles are not found for student development staff members, who have traditionally been thought of as "housekeepers," "petty administrators," and counselors. Brown suggests that viable title alternatives would be as diagnosticians, consultants, programmers, technologists, professors, administrators, behavioral scientists, and researchers.[10] In developing new role models, there are several key elements, including changes in attitude--to achieve equal partnership with faculty and administration as educators, more direct ties with the academic area, acquiring proficiency in the behaviorial sciences, and achieving some type of direct contact with every student.[11]

There has been a rapid change in the kind of people who attend college --there are many who do not fit the traditional pattern of 17 - 22 years old, male, white, and middle class. There are an increasing number of adults and part-time students. Are these persons to be served by the student personnel area? One of the most irritating factors that adult educators encounter is the reluctance of the student development offices of colleges to recognize that there are more and more atypical students who should be served. There is a great deal of ambivalence among adult educators about how they should be served, however. Adult educators may wish to maintain identical academic standards for day and evening students, but institutions usually find it most practical to set up separate administrative units for adult students. The creation of these units makes the administration of student services even more difficult and virtually forces student personnel offices to have two distinct programs, one for "day" students, and one for adult learners.

Traditionally, evening programs have been viewed as "moneymakers" because class sizes are large, most courses are taught by adjuncts, and the cost of

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[10] Ibid., pp. 38 - 41.

[11] Ibid., pp. 42 - 42.

"support services" is minimal. There is a growing awareness, however, that in order to retain adult students, "support" activities such as academic and career counseling are essential. The need for the integration of non-traditional programs and student services is obvious, and new models of administration must be developed.

Arthur L. Tollefson's New Approaches to College Student Development addresses this problem and suggests ways in which student development professionals can respond to the changed conditions. Tollefson is particularly concerned with ways to serve the new students because he finds the measures taken by colleges and universities to recruit minority and other non-traditional students have been superficial and have not really provided the necessary support for truly disadvantaged students to succeed.[12] He describes four major clusters of approaches that have been developed:

1. *Admissions policies have been modified.*

2. *Special efforts are being made to recruit students of the "new breed."*

3. *Compensatory education programs often include pre-college "vestibule" training, extra time to complete a curricular program, and special provisions to alleviate the impact of certain college regulations which have negative educational effect.*

4. *The growing recognition of the importance of attitudes, values, and self-concepts in the educational process has generated a number of efforts designed to facilitate appropriate changes in these attitudes.*[13]

The demands for programs with increased personal attention to minorities and the disadvantaged have generated increased pressure from other students to get away from the "education factory" with its depersonalized structure.

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[12] Arthur L. Tollenfson, New Approaches to College Student Development (New York: Behavioral Publications, Inc., 1975), pp. 28 - 34.

[13] Ibid., p. 56.

One of the measures being taken to achieve this more personalized environment is a change in counseling emphasis. De-specialization, the use of peer counselors and interested others, with the specialized counselor serving as a consultant, has been used effectively. In outreach activities, the counselor acts as the student's advocate, going where the students are. Counselors are also focusing on helping students develop a life-style rather than merely choosing a lucrative vocation. Universities have developed new ways of packaging and making more accesible the services of student development personnel. "Student Assistance Centers," satellite counseling centers, the use of paraprofessional personnel, peer management projects, programs on life planning--all are attempts at making the university climate more humanisitic and personalized.[14]

The lack of the sense of community in modern society has been a concern of thinkers since the 1960's, and it has become a key goal of student development officers at institutions which have grown too large for any kind of interpersonal relationships and feeling of belongingness. Basic to this approach is finding or developing "transcedent values syndromes," such as are supposed to exist in small donominational colleges. The second necessary condition is increased frequency and intensity of contacts between people. The third condition that most concerns student development perople is peer influence, which has seldom been harnassed to accomplish goals. Another factor which contributes to a felling of community is to have a place or a territory where students do not feel that they are unwelcome.[15]

One of the most radical breakthroughts in student services work is the attempt to integrate student development courses into the curriculum. Three

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[14] Ibid., pp. 57 - 61.

[15] Ibid., pp. 87 - 90.

major clusters of courses have been added to the curriculum: the first offers courses in human development, life-style planning and personal understanding. The second cluster emphasizes independent study and experimental learning, and the third opens up new areas of academic study that have not previously been considered appropriate for academic programs. By including remedial and affective as well as cognitive learning in the curriculum, student development personnel are attempting to respond to the needs and desires of students, not just the prescriptions of tradition or the demands of society.[16] This approach has been more successful at community colleges and state universities than at liberal arts colleges, where it is often difficult to demonstrate the academic legitimacy of such offerings. They are seldom credit-granting courses if they are offered.

Intervention in behavior development by student development "specialists" --rather than "counselors" in student personnel work--seems to be an adequate way of summing up the approach of student development programs in the community colleges. The emerging model for student development work creates a climate in which the students have.:

1. *Freedom to choose their own directions for learnings.*
2. *Responsibility for those choices.*
3. *Interpersonal interaction with the learning facilitator that includes:*
   a. *Challenge, encounter, stimulation, confrontation, excitement;*
   b. *Warmth, caring, understanding, acceptance, support;*
   c. *Appreciation of individual differences.*[17]

This program concentrates on positive changes in student behavior rather than on the efficient functioning of services. In the new model, the student development

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[16] Ibid., P. 86.

[17] Terry O. Banion, Alice Thurston, James Gulden, "Junior College Student Personnel Work: An Emerging Model," Student Development Programs in the Community Junior College. p. 203.

specialist is a "facilitator" of the student's intellectual and social growth.[18]

Counseling is usually regarded as the key student development service; indeed, in most institutions "student development" and "counseling" are synonymous. From the beginning, counseling in the community college has been defined as a service for all students, focusing on vocational and educational decision making as opposed to more personal clinical problems.[19] The use of group counseling is now a widespread phenomenon. It is used primarily for working with students who have academic deficiencies, in orientation programs, and in human encounter designed to facilitate the development of the awareness of self and others. The "human potential seminars" are available to help them increase self motivation, self worth, and self determination.[20] As has been noted above, in many colleges these group efforts have been given credence as part of the curriculum.

Probably the most difficult components of the student personnel function in the program for adults is the area of student activities. Because most of the students work full time, and all are commuters, it is very difficult to develop full involvement of students in "extra curricular" activities. Many of the colleges have made attempts to involve students in leadership development programs, in sharing in the college governance by service on committees, and by giving imput to the development of the curriculum.

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[18] Ibid., pp. 204 - 205.

[19] Jane E. Matson, "Student Personnel Work Four Years Later: The Carnegie Study and Its Impact," Student Development Programs in the Community Junior College (edited by Terry O'Banion and Alice Thurston) (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey" Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 173-174.

[20] Terry O'Banion, "Exceptional Practices in Community Junior College Student Personnel Programs," Student Development Programs in the Community Junior College, pp. 187-188.

A very important consideration for all institutions, the burden of which falls heavily upon student personnel workers, is to attempt to reduce attrition. Mayhew suggests that the greatest single factor "is to contrive ways for almost all students to become directly involved in some significant activity, whether it be a sorority, football, student government, student publication, musical or dramatic groups, or participation in the actual governance of the institution."[21] The second most important factor is to make sure that students can cope adequately with academic work. The financial aid effort is crucial, as is making the campus environment an attractive place to be.[22] These techniques are not easily applied to adult students, who have neither the time nor the inclination to become involved in them.

Some authors recommend management techniques to improve performance in student development: there is a necessity for assessing needs, stating goals and objectives, designing a program, improving the program, and reporting the results.[23] They assert that we can no longer make simple subjective judgments about programs and neglect such thorough evaluation. A most important consideration in the effectiveness of student development is in the way the institution is organized administratively. Tollefson asserts that the chief student personnel officer should have a voice in the development of the curriculum, he should report directly to the president on an equal basis with the academic dean, and he should organize his own staff so that if can carry out its work effectively.[24] But what is the most efficient organization? For budget management in personnel administration, there still is a need for centralized leadership.

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[21] Lewis B. Mayhew, Surviving the Eighties: Strategies and Procedures for Solving Fiscal and Enrollment Problems (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979) pp. 166-171.

[22] Ibid., pp. 195-197.

[23] Theodore K. Miller, Judith S. Prince, The Future of Student Affairs (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976), pp. 139-145.

[24] Tollefson, pp. 132-135.

Liberal arts colleges which have put in "night programs" to increase revenue have in many cases actually changed their basic mission by doing so. Without ever admitting it, they have backed away from the humanistic orientation of the liberal arts into a pragmatic, factory-like emulation of the great public education mills. On the other hand, cognizant that failure to preserve the concept of the development of "whole persons" will serve to undermine the basic purpose of the liberal arts, other colleges have tried a structuralist approach to administrative functions.

Many institutions have abandoned the framework built around a Dean of Students who oversees all of the disparate "support" activities and have arrived at a more logical grouping of functions. One model sets up a Dean of Admissions as well as a Dean of Students, the former concerned with recruitment, admissions, records, and financial aid, and the latter with academic and career counseling, discipline, housing, and student activities. One problem with this structure is that it usually does not deal adequately with adult students because discipline and housing are not germane to the adult situation, and they tend to overshadow the subtler needs of adult students. In addition, this model is duplicative and therefore not cost efficient. Its redeeming feature is that it at least gives lip

service to adult needs and does provide some services, albeit token ones, for them.

Another administrative model takes into account the adult student and places adult and continuing education together with segments of "student personnel work" under a Dean of Educational Services who reports to the chief academic officer and who has responsibility for the "educational" components of both previously separate operations. The Dean's functions are primarily in the coordination of services essential to the educational program; that is, he develops curricula, initiates academic programs, and ties experiential learning together with academic, career, and personal counseling for both the day and evening students. The Dean of Admissions concerns himself with day and evening recruitment, admissions, records, and financial aid. In this model, income producing programs do not overshadow crucial non-revenue producing -- but still educational -- components, and equal attention is accorded counseling and advisement.

New administrative models should be well planned, rather than makeshift or token arrangements such as the so-called "student services" components of many adult education divisions. When adult education is regarded as an auxiliary enterprise

whose existence is justified only by the revenue it brings in, it cannot help but lower the high standards held for "regular" students in good liberal arts colleges. Whether student personnel work is a "support service" or whether it can take its place on an equal basis with the academic programs of an institution depends largely upon how well it responds administratively to the changing priorities of higher education, and indeed, of individual institutions. Probably no standard model will fit every college; there is a need for well thought out administrative groupings. The presence of adult students, and their need for services that are different from those of younger people poses a great challenge to college leadership.

Whether top administrators and faculties will continue to regard the student personnel area as a "petty administrative" function or as a crucial, integral part of the educational mission of the institution will be determined to a great extend by how creatively and logically functions are organized and administered. All indications are that adult education will continue to be a growth area in higher education, but whether or not these efforts grow qualitatively as well as quantatively will depend upon the unresolved question of how well they are integrated with the administration of student personnel services.

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